



FIRST AFRICAN BAPTIST CHURCH
REV. RICHARD L. MORGAN, PASTOR

FABC Communicator

The Pastor's Corner



Greetings to my **First African Baptist Church** family. It is by the Lord's mercy and goodness toward us that we are able to have this blessed means of communication. Although this is my second month as pastor, I praise God for this church family and His love that abides within. In such a short time God has already revealed His presence in this place. It is by our faith in Him even greater things will be revealed. The scripture says, *For eyes have not seen neither ears heard neither has it entered into the hearts of men all the things that God has in store for them that love Him and are called according to His purpose.* It is now time for us to plan the work and work the plan. With this in mind let us always remember that we have to get our differences settled because our Lord will not work in the midst of confusion. Therefore let us move forward in unity, love, and strength. Again thank you for your spirit of cooperation and participation as we reap the harvest that God has sown for us.

Bless each of you in His name

Inside this issue:

Message from the Pastor	Front page
The Torchbearers and Dr. Joe L. Reed	3
Sunbeams Speak	4
Church News	6
Leadership	8
Church Scholarship	11
Birthdays and Anniversaries	12

Special points of interest:

- Profile of Our 22nd Pastor
- Graduations from Pre-School to Master's Level
- More Than a Mother
- Family Night in February
- Leadership

More Than A Mother

When God set the world in place, when He hung the stars up in space, when He made the land and the sea, then He made you and me.

He sat back and saw all that was good, He saw things to be as they should. Just one more blessing He had in store; He created a mother, but whatever for?

He knew a mother would have a special place to shine His reflection on her child's face. A mother will walk the extra mile just to see her children smile. She'll work her fingers to the bone to make a house into a home.

A mother is there to teach and guide, a mother will stay right by your side. She'll be there through your pain and strife, she'll stay constant in your life.

A mother will lend a helping hand until you have the strength to stand. She'll pick you up when you are down, when you need a friend she'll stick around.

A mother is one who listens well, will keep her word; will never tell.

A mother never pokes or pries but stands quietly by your side, giving you the strength you need, encouraging you to succeed.

A mother is one who can be strong when you need someone to lean on.

You're more than a mother to me; a reflection of Him in your face I see, a love that knows no boundaries.

I'm glad that you chose to be all this and more to me. You share a love that knows no end, you're more than my mother, you are my friend.

—By Kari Keshmiry



Mother's Day

Announcement

Vacation Bible School is planned for June 2-6, 2008 from 5:30–8:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 5:30–8:30 p.m. on Friday. This year's theme is *God's Big Back Yard*. If you would like to sign up to work, please see **Sis. Vera Key**, Vacation Bible School Director, or **Sis. Audrey Ellis**, **Shana Rivers**, or **Sis. Gladys Stringfellow**. Workers are needed in all areas.

The next Vacation Bible School workshop will take place on Saturday, May 24, 2008 beginning at 10:00 a.m. All workers, please plan to attend. *Continue to prayer for a successful VBS.*

The Torchbearers Presents Dr. Joe L. Reed

By Dr. Oscar D. Tucker

On Friday 18 April 2008 **The Torchbearers of First African Baptist Church** presented Dr. Joe L. Reed, Associate Executive Secretary of the Alabama Education Association, arguably the most powerful special interest group in Alabama. A thin gathering of interested persons, including one Tuscaloosa City Council member and a few **Torchbearers**, enjoyed a retelling of some of the struggles endured by black Alabamians during the modern Civil Rights Era.

Reed, a native Alabamian, was born in Conecuh County and is a graduate of Alabama State University and Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio. He burst upon the scene locally and nationally while serving as Executive Secretary of the Alabama State Teachers Association (ASTA). He was the principal negotiator for ASTA when that black teacher organization merged with the white teacher organization, Alabama Education Association (AEA). After the merger he became the Associate Executive Director of AEA and continues to serve in that position.

Before the merger, Reed declared, there were four pay scales for teachers in Alabama. Two pay scales were based on race, such that, white teachers and administrators were paid more than their place counterparts. There were two pay scales for elementary and secondary teachers, black and white, with secondary teachers and administrators receiving higher salaries than their elementary counterparts. This inequity was rectified when the two teacher organizations merged under the name AEA.

He co-founded the Alabama Democratic Conference (ADC) in the early 60's to support the successful election of Sen. John F. Kennedy to the presidency of the United States. Reed did not rest on those laurels. As undisputed leader of ADC, he led the fight for the election of blacks to political positions all over Alabama, locally and statewide. One of those he helped was the venerable lately departed, Tuscaloosa County Commissioner Joe Mallisham, who became the first black to serve on that body since Reconstruction.

Before he was elected to public office Joe Reed was known as a "king maker" because of his unique ability to get blacks and whites elected to public office. He is the consummate politician and has never forgotten his humble beginnings, and is always in touch with the average hard working Alabamian. That is why many Alabama politicians, locally and nationally elected, will not vote on a bill without consulting Dr. Joe L. Reed. In the fight to reapportion the State to guarantee black representation, white politicians, Democrats and Republicans, stalled and delayed over where to draw the district lines. While white politicians agonized over how best to comply with a federal decree to reapportion, Reed presented his own reapportionment plan to the federal authorities. His plan was accepted. He was also the prime mover in the formation of the Seventh Congressional District, the seat presently occupied by Congressman Artur Davis.

After a presentation of about thirty minutes Dr. Reed conducted an extended question and answer session. He explained his role as a super delegate to the Democratic National Convention. In the Democratic Party there are three types of delegates; two types are elected at the state level, those elected at state caucuses and those elected during the presidential primary races.

—See, *Torchbearers*, page 5

Rev. Richard L. Morgan Our 22nd Pastor

Rev. Richard L. Morgan a native of Chattanooga, Tennessee is the son of Mrs. Rosa Morgan and the late Mr. Robert Morgan of Chattanooga and Ms. Fannie Hardison of Columbia, Tennessee.

He attended Chattanooga public school and graduated from Riverside High School in 1971. He received his bachelor's degree from Birmingham Baptist College, Birmingham, Alabama. He is presently pursuing a master's degree from Birmingham Theological Seminary.

Prior to entering the ministry, Rev. Morgan was an ordained deacon, director of male chorus, and a Sunday School teacher. He accepted his calling into the ministry July, 1987 under the late Rev. T. T. Jackson Tallahassee, Florida. He served as associate minister at the Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church, Tallahassee, Florida; Orchard Knob Baptist Church, Chattanooga, Tennessee and First Baptist Church Ensley, Birmingham, Alabama. He served as pastor of First Baptist Church, Northport, Alabama from January 1994 – January 2006.

Rev. Morgan is currently a member of the New Zion Baptist Church, Northport, Alabama. He was called to Pastor **First African Baptist Church** on March 1, 2008.

He is the proud father of two daughters, **Moya Elyse** and **Bria Kathryn**.

Sunbeams Speak . . .

What I get out of Sunbeam meetings: *I get a lot out of Sunbeam meetings. One thing is to always trust in God. Another thing is to ask God what he wants you to do. The last thing is to treat others like you want to be treated. I also learn to be devoted to God always.*

—TeLeah Byrd

What I like about Sunbeam: *We learn about different stories that are in the Holy Bible. Last week, we talked about devotion to God. I feel like I really know about God.*

—Tameron Long

Sunbeam makes me feel very happy. You can learn about Jesus and sing a lot of songs. Sunbeam is fun. When I come to Sunbeam meeting, it makes me feel happy.

—Jonathan Lawson

What Sunbeam means to me: *To me Sunbeam means being able to worship God in a way that not only helps your mind, but helps your spirit in worship. It also means that worshipping God is not only reading the Bible, but it can be a physical fun time to talk about things with people who care about you.*

—Taylor Long

What I get out of Sunbeam meetings: *When I come to Sunbeam, I feel happy. It means a lot to me because I just love to know the fact that I am helping someone. I love doing projects for church service and other events that we have at church. The things I benefit from Sunbeam nights are the wonderful lessons that we are taught about God.*

—Miracle Lawson

Torchbearers

Continued from page 3

The super delegates is a third type and less well known. Super Delegates are; the elected members of the Democratic National Committee (DNC), Democratic Governors, Democratic US Senators and US Representatives, distinguished party leaders (former Presidents, former Vice Presidents, former DNC chairmen, former Democratic leaders of the House and Senate), and others. A candidate for the Democratic Party nomination for president needs 2,025 delegates. Reed is one of approximately 850 super delegates. He is a delegate because he is a member of the DNC. Dr. Reed is an avowed supporter of Sen. Hillary Clinton. He cited the following reasons: he believes Clinton has a better chance than Sen. Barak Obama of winning in November and he believes electing a democrat is more important than casting a ballot for Obama to make a historical statement; and he thinks that black America is indebted to the Clintons for the progress blacks made during the President Bill Clinton era, therefore blacks should not be ingrates. He let it be known that he would enthusiastically support Obama were he given the nomination. As a super delegate he is not bound by the state primary voting results, which favored Sen. Obama. He is strictly bound by his conscience, as are

the other super delegates.

Reed has served as a delegate to the DNC eight times, and was the Chairman of the Alabama Delegation during the convention held in Los Angeles in 2000. He serves as Vice Chairman of the Democratic Party for Minority Rights. For over forty years he has led the effort to get blacks elected and appointed to public offices, including federal marshals, federal and state judges, members of the boards of registrars, legislators, county commissioners, city councils, and school boards. He served on the Montgomery City Council for 24 years. In large measure, it is because of Joe Reed's efforts that Alabama has more black



elected officials per capita than any other state in the Nation.

Many Americans, of all colors and political stripes, played major roles in the struggle for equal rights. Most of them we know well—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, Viola Liuzzo, President Lyndon Baines Johnson, Federal District Judge Frank M. Johnson, Supreme Court Chief Justice

Earl Warren, and others. These were the headliners, who put life, limb, and family on the line for justice and principle. Death was the price some of them paid for their efforts. Joe Reed was not in the glare of the television lights to the extent he is now, but he was there in the early days playing a key role behind the scenes. He and I marched together up Montgomery's Dexter Avenue in the historic walk from Selma to the Capital City. We marched with Dr. Ralph Bunche, first person of color to receive the Nobel Peace Prize and with Harry Belafonte and his wife.

After the laws guaranteeing the right to vote were passed, foot soldiers were needed to battle in the trenches eyeball to eyeball with hose who would deny minority rights. Joe L. Reed was then and continues to be a leading civil and political rights foot soldier in our State and Nation. The Torchbearers regret that only a pitiful few availed themselves of the opportunity to hear Dr. Reed. Perhaps we can persuade him to return. In the near future The Torchbearers will present one of Dr. Reed's protégés, Jerome Gray, who is a state coordinator for Sen. Barak Obama. We hope and pray that the attendance will be much better.

Church News

We Welcome Our New Church Members

We welcome you most heartily and hope that you will share along with us the joy of being part of the Christian family here at **First African**. The members who recently joined are:

Chris Bell	Timothy Datcher
Krystin Glass	Patrice C. Glass
Theodore Brevin Glass	Irma R. Gore
Lisa Harris	Devin Jackson
Angela Showell	Kiara Slater
Rickey Smith	Melanie C. Thomas
Joel J. Wade	Paula Wade
E'jai Washington	I'Mon Washington
Lisa Washington	Yvette Washington
Zuri Washington	Ashley White
Marcus Whitt	

Congratulations

We offer congratulations to our 2008 graduates

Brandon Byrd—from Global Education pre-school program.

Briana Bell—from Paul Bryant High School. Briana plans to attend either the University of West Alabama or the University of Alabama.

Kalen Charles Carter—from Tuscaloosa County High School. Kalen plans to attend Shelton State.

Daniel Jay Cameron—from the University of Louisville in Louisville, Kentucky with a Bachelor of Science degree in Political Science. Daniel will graduate magna cum laude. He will enter law school with a full scholarship in September 2008. Daniel is the son of Lavonnie and Sandra Cameron of Elizabethtown, Kentucky and the grandson of **Enoch and Laura Cameron**.

Mark Griffith—from Stillman College with a Bachelor's degree in Business. Mark is our new church musician.

Keira Jamila Ellis—from Auburn University with a dual Master's degree in Community Planning and Public Administration. She has committed a year of service to the United States through the AmeriCorps VISTA program. **Keira** currently works as the Resource Development Coordinator and the Project Manager of Macon County, Alabama Habitat for Humanity. Upon completion of her studies she pursue careers in the area of Non-Profit Management and Affordable Housing Agencies.



More Church News

Congratulations to

Mrs. Myrtle Edwards Gray who was one of six members inducted into the Tuscaloosa County Civic Hall of Fame. Members are chosen who have made important contributions to civic life in the community. This annual event began in the year 2000.

Mrs. Gray, a native of Tuscaloosa, worked as an educator for 43 years. The recipient has served in many capacities at the **First African Baptist Church**, YMCA, Alabama Association of Women's Clubs, and many other educational and civic associations. She also served as President of the Women's Auxiliary of the Northwest District State Convention for 20-plus years. *We salute you, Sis. Gray!!!*

.....



Congratulations to

Nailah Densua May who married **Marlon Ramon Boyd** on Saturday, April 26, 2008 here at **First African Baptist Church**. **Nailah** is the daughter of Samuel & Dorothy Jean Wells and Rev. Claborn May, Sr. and the granddaughter of Dorothy Smith and the late Jasper Smith and the late Willie C. Corder, Sr.

.....

Congratulations to

TeLeah Byrd on being inducted into the National Junior Honor Society on May 4, 2008. To qualify for this honor, a student must maintain at least a 3.60 grade point average. It is also based on character, leadership, scholarship, and citizenship.

.....

Sick & Shut-In

Please continue to pray for our sick and shut-in members. See our weekly church bulletin for a list of names.

Leadership

By Sis. Gladys Stringfellow

Leadership is the function performed by a leader. You will observe that the word is made up of the root “leader” and the stem word “ship.” A ship is a vessel designed to travel in deep waters and has to be steered to move along. Anyone can steer a ship, but it takes a skillful person to steer it through rough waters and contrary winds or the ship is liable to sink or be destroyed.

An effective leader is one who is capable of steering the ship of destiny to a safe and secure harbor even through conditions along the journey may sometimes be rugged, hazardous and unfavorable.

When people are put in positions of leadership they seek help from many people and many different places, but the best source of leadership training and teaching has been and still is the Bible—God’s word.

In ancient Israel, when God’s people had a good king all went well with the nation. When they had a bad one things went poorly for everyone. Leadership is desired in the home, the church, the workplace, the community and in the political arena. If we are to achieve any measure of success in these areas there are certain traits, qualities or principles that leaders must possess. Although there are many, I will mention just a few.

A leader must have a **VISION**. The Bible states in Proverbs 28:18 that without a vision the people perish. What is vision? In his book “Principles of Vision” Dr. Myles Munroe, a very successful and renowned writer of this century, pens these words “Sight is a function of the eyes, but vision is a function of the mind.” We can see the material things with the naked eyes, things that we can feel and touch. We can also see light and darkness, but a vision can only be perceived by the mind.

Vision determines the direction of the group or organization, therefore when one is placed in a position of leadership, many questions come to mind.

Questions which can only be answered by seeking divine guidance that is done through the act of **PRAYER** as one ventures into the uncharted waters of the future. What do you do with the vision? In the book of Habakkuk 2:2-3, the Lord told the prophet these things. “Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it because it will surely come it will not tarry and it will not fail.”

This is the **PLAN** given by God which should be the blueprint for building the bridges for all future endeavors. If you fail to plan, then you plan to fail.

No leader, however trained, gifted or experienced is capable of accomplishing a task single handedly. A leader must be able to influence, organize and mobilize others by defining his own **CHARACTER**. This means that he must be the person; he/she wants others to be. The highest achievement of a leader is winning the respect and trust of a people. People are more apt to trust and respect you when what you say and what you do are one and the same. Do not ask anyone to do anything that you are not willing to do. Leaders serve their people and their purpose.

Once you are able to influence, then you should seek to **EMPOWER**. No leader has all the attributes of effective leadership. One should recognize one’s strength and weaknesses and select people who will complement him/her without fear of being intimidated. The late President Theodore Roosevelt realized this fact and said “the best executive is one who has sense enough to pick good men to do what he wants done and the self-restraint enough to keep from meddling with them while they do it.”

— See, **Leadership**, page 9

In the book of Exodus 18:13-24, the story is told of Moses as a judge and being surrounded by people from morning until evening. After observing this procedure, Jethro, his father-in-law asked, "What is this you are doing for the people?" Moses replied that he was settling disputes and making known God's instructions. Jethro told him that he was wearing himself out; instead he should select able men from among the people, men who fear God, are trustworthy and hate dishonest gain. Assign these men to groups he said, let them settle the minor cases and then bring the important cases to you and they will bear the burden with you and you will endure. Moses listened and did as he was advised. Effective leaders delegate responsibilities and this should empower followers.

One of the key responsibilities of a leader is **SUCCESSION** that is preparing someone to pick-up where you left off. Success is measured by succession. Every leader eventually leaves an office or organization. It may be by promotion, transfer, retirement, ill-health, or death. Therefore leaders should not only be leading followers but developing leaders in order to give the organization a smooth succession.

Some leaders enjoy seeing an organization fall apart or die after they leave office, but this is a poor reflection on any leader. One's ability as a leader is not judged merely by what the team or group accomplished during one's tenure. You will be judged on how well you organization did after you are gone.

My Jail Ministry Epiphany

By Sis. Diana Bibb

During my most recent visit to the Metro Jail as an instructor/group leader with the NABD Jail Ministry, I had what can only be described as an epiphany...What is an epiphany? It means manifestation, appearance, or in the context of spiritual development, a higher level of awareness. Christians have taken it over and made it our own, but actually, many people have epiphany experiences: suddenly, you understand—you "see"—something profound that you have not understood or been aware of before.

That is exactly what happened to. Now, I "get it." An experience during my last visit to the jail confirmed for me my role in God's Plan; which is to capture the attention of the inmates and then bear witness to God's awesome Power of Redemption.

Here is my testimony:

After arriving at the Metro Jail on the afternoon of Thursday, March 27th, I preceded through the lobby into the small courtroom where we meet for prayer and group assignments before entering the cellblocks. As I led a group of Jail Ministry workers into the first cell that we would visit in Cell Block A, I was excited and nervous about teaching my first lesson.

Now, one might ask, "How was this jail visit different from previous ones?" Well, I was blessed with the opportunity to share the good news of Jesus Christ with a young man I have

known since his little league years and through high school. I could tell by the expression on his face that he was as happy to see me as I was to see him. He looked up at me and asked, "Miss Bibb, do you know who I am?" I answered, "of course I know who you are, Fred."

It was such a wonderful reunion for both of us because he had been on my mind and in my heart the previous week. I had been prayerfully concerned about him. I needed to know that he was doing as well as could be expected under the circumstances. My prayer was answered that afternoon. He looked healthy, and he was very attentive as I taught the lesson on the meaning of Easter.

At the conclusion of our visit, the members of our group said their goodbyes. My young friend looked at me with the eyes of a son yearning for a mother's embrace. Realizing that we were not allowed to have any physical contact with the inmates, I said to him in a questioning manner, "You do know that I love you, don't you?" He answered, "Yes, Miss Bibb, I know you do." As I fought back the tears swelling in my eyes, I could feel the fullness in my heart. I apologized to Fred for not being allowed to give him the hug that he so desperately needed. Instead, I blew him a kiss and waved goodbye until next time. I walked out of that jail cell having experienced an epiphany!

Family Night

By Sis. Linda Carter

Our last Family Night was held on Thursday, February 22, 2008. This Family Night continued our Black History month reflections. The last Sunday in February, **Sis. Betty Lawson** reminded us of how far we have come as African Americans. She acted out the character "Mrs. Ann," the owner of a plantation where blacks were free, but had to work as slaves. **Sis. Jessie Martin** was "Ellie Mae," a black woman who had to cook, clean, and see after Mrs. Ann's needs. Mrs. Ann gave numerous and difficult tasks, but Ellie Mae was obedient.

At Family Night, Mrs. Ann came to Ellie Mae's church. She told the church that back then you had to settle for less, but now you have the opportunity to do all that you want and to be all that you can be. She reminded the church that we must get an education and study on the right things. A good example Mrs. Ann gave was that young people can go out and make money, but they do not spend wisely. She added that they do not save and they have to use check cashing places, such as Money in a Flash as a means of getting quick money to pay debts. By next payday, they have to pay them first with interest, still be behind in bills, and low on funds for later. They are simply living from paycheck to paycheck. A wise idea is to save a little at a time and spend less on unnecessary things.

The food was something great to see and to taste. Old fashioned pot luck dishes served as the meal for the evening. **Bro. and Sis. Murray Jackson** prepared rabbit stew that was the highlight of the evening. Additional food items included strict-of-lean meat, butter beans, crackling bread, hocakes, tea cakes, and much, much more. Thanks to everyone who prepared or purchased something for Family Night.

Thank God for our church family.

Don't Stay Away from Church

... because YOU ARE POOR.

... there's no admission charge.

... because YOU DON'T HAVE GOOD CLOTHES

... we're not running a fashion show

... because YOU DON'T HAVE A RIDE

... we'll pick you up and take you home.

First African Baptist Church

Criteria for Scholarship

All graduating students that are members of First African, and meet these requirements, will receive a financial reward scholarship when you enroll in a College or Technical Institute of your choice.

1. Must be an active member in good standing at First African Baptist Church, demonstrated by participating in a specific ministry group or choir.
2. Must perform at least one community service project during every semester.
3. Must have at least a "C" average.
4. Only the student can sign for themselves.
5. Must sign and complete a scholarship application every semester beginning with the 9th grade through the 12th grade to be eligible for four years of scholarship funds, otherwise, you will only be eligible for the number of years you did sign up.
6. Must submit a copy of an official high school transcript (report card) each semester to be turned in with your completed application.
7. Must show proof of acceptance every semester from a two-year or four-year College or Technical Institution before receiving a check of \$250.00 from the church each semester.
8. A College information form must be filled out your first year of college and must be updated if any of the information change or you changes schools.

All forms can be obtained from the church office or any member of the Scholarship Committee.

Committee members

Sis. Betty Bagby

Sis. Brenda Bell

Sis. Emma Melton

Birthdays

**FIRST AFRICAN BAPTIST CHURCH
REV. RICHARD L. MORGAN, PASTOR**

2621 Stillman Boulevard
Post Office Box 1578
Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35403
Corner of Stillman Boulevard and T.Y. Rogers Jr. Avenue

Phone: 205-758-2833
Fax: 205-758-7572

The Friendly Church on the Corner

We're on the Web

www.firstafricanchurch.org

The *Communicator* is a project of the East End Circle where Sis. Willie M. Carter is chair. The purpose of this newsletter is to disseminate information to members regarding the Bible and church activities. Copies are mailed to students and anyone away from home. The newsletter is also sent to sick and shut in members locally.

Any suitable literary or Bible-based articles will be accepted from members for publication at any time. These may be given to **Sis. Irma Mason** or **Sis. Gladys Stringfellow**.

Newsletter Staff:

Sis. Willie M. Carter and Sis. Ida Hobson
Church News Coordinators

Sis. Gladys Stringfellow
Managing Editor

Sis. Shana R. Rivers
Designer/Editor

Sis. Linda Carter and Sis. Diana Bibb
Contributing Writers

May	2	Nailah Boyd
	6	Cierra Moss
		Mary Harris
	9	Bryant Melton
	12	Roderick Martin Jr.
	16	Lillie Mason
	20	Matthew D. Brown
	22	Nella S. King
	27	Ken Williams
		Pinky Wade
	30	Mary Richey
31	Rev. Don D. Key	
June	1	Vabren Watts
	5	Anthony Johnson
	6	Nathaniel Howard
	7	Wynton Kemp
	13	Tyler Long
		Ida Guyton
		Susie M. Green
	14	Terry Long
		Mary Hinton
	17	Nastassja Black
18	Anstasia Long	
19	Nathaniel Edwards	
20	Reginald Bell	
26	Patrick Washington	

Happy Anniversary

May	5	Bryant & Emma Melton
June	2	Enoch & Laura Cameron
	20	Terry & Sharon Long

NOTE:

If your birthday or anniversary are incorrect or does not appear on the current lists, please let us know and we will be happy to make corrections and additions.